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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATIONS AND REPORTS OF SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS AND REPRESENTATIVES

Letter dated 19 March 1996 from the Secretary-General to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to refer to resolution 50/199, adopted by the General Assembly on 22 December 1995, on the situation of human rights in Nigeria. In paragraph 7 of the resolution, I was requested, in the discharge of my good offices mandate and in cooperation with the Commonwealth, to undertake discussions with the Government of Nigeria and to report on progress in the implementation of the resolution and on the possibilities for the international community to offer practical assistance to Nigeria in achieving the restoration of democratic rule.

Following consultations with the Government of Nigeria and the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth and at the Government's request, I have decided to send a fact-finding mission to Nigeria composed of three persons internationally recognized for their judgement and independence of mind. The mission is mandated to address itself to two issues of concern to the international community, namely:

(a) The recent trial and execution of Mr. Ken Saro-Wiwa and others. In this connection, the mission will examine the judicial procedures of the trial in the context both of the various international human rights instruments to which Nigeria is a party and of relevant Nigerian law;

(b) The plans of the Government of Nigeria to implement its declared commitment to restore the country to democratic rule.

The mission will subsequently submit to me a report which will include recommendations for action which could usefully be taken by the Government of Nigeria and others.

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The mission will be composed of Mr. Koffi-Atsu Amega, who is a former Minister for Foreign Affairs and a former President of the Supreme Court of Togo; Shri Justice V. S. Malimath, who is a member of the National Human Rights Commission of India; and Mr. John P. Pace, who is a Director in the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat and a citizen of Malta.

The Government of Nigeria has undertaken to cooperate fully with the mission and to give it free access to all persons, places and information which the mission considers necessary for the discharge of its mandate.

I should be grateful if you would bring the above information to the attention of the members of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI